

December 29, 2021 – STEM School Info 12/29

Parents/Guardians,

We hope your holiday break with your student(s) has been relaxing and wonderful. As we approach school starting up for 2022, here are some items of note as we return.

January School Start Dates and Times

The STEM School will be closed for winter break from December 18 through January 2. *The first day back for the second semester for all students is Wednesday, January 5.* All students (grades 9-12) are to report by 9:30am. Full days of school will start back on that day (9:30am-4:30pm).

Students in grades 11 and 12 will be at school each day for the full day (9:30am-4:30pm) from January 5 through January 14. They will begin their spring college type schedule on Tuesday, January 18. They will receive their final spring schedules for parent approval the week of January 10-14. Any students in grades 11 and 12 that have questions about their schedule and/or college courses should reach out to our school counselor Anna Millard (millard_anna@hcde.org).

Chattanooga State – Closed Campus Dates

The Chattanooga State Community College has a closed campus to the public until Wednesday, January 5. All vehicles entering campus prior to January 5 will be stopped at the security checkpoint at the main entrance. If you are scheduled to meet at the STEM School for an appointment prior to January 5, please let the security guard know you have a meeting at the STEM School.

Seniors – Balfour Graduation Items

Balfour will be here on Wednesday, January 5 at 1:00pm to explain the ordering process to our seniors for their graduation items. Parents, please ask your student for their information packets on

that date as Balfour will return the next Wednesday, January 12 to collect the graduation order forms and payments.

Food Drive Impact

The Chattanooga Area Food Bank has informed us that our STEM House Competition food drive brought in 1424 pounds of food for families in Chattanooga. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped families in need this holiday season and beyond!

Thank you for your support!

Dr. Tony Donen
Principal

December 10, 2021 – STEM School Info 12/10

Parents/Guardians,

Happy Friday! This is our last Friday email for this fall semester. Below are items for you as we move toward winter break. Have a great holiday!

ER Week (Extended Remediation) Quarter 2 – Dec 13 thru Dec 17

At the end of each quarter this year, students have an opportunity to improve all learning target grades during ER Week. ER Week is a time that students can re-submit graded projects for higher levels of proficiency. Students can also re-take assessments to earn a higher level of proficiency. Higher levels of proficiency include grades of proficient (85) or advanced (100). For students who are struggling with reaching proficient (85), students will have an opportunity to work with teachers in focus groups to earn basic (70).

During ER Week, three items take place: student independent work time, workshops run by teachers where students choose to attend to get assistance or re-assess, and focus groups where students are assigned and required to work with a teacher. New work and assignments are not posted during this week. This week is set up as an opportunity for students to improve any learning target grade for the first semester.

For students in grades 9-10 (underclassmen) who have no missing and/or below basic learning targets, these students may continue to work in ER to improve their grades to advanced (100). Students will also have an enrichment opportunity for the week – Fabrication Days. These students will be working in the brand-new Global Center for Digital Innovation (GCDI) on STEM innovation projects and/or micro-credentialing projects.

For students in grades 11-12 (upperclassmen), this ER Week also has additional differences. When an upperclassman no longer has any ER work left to remediate, the upperclassman is not required to attend school for the remainder of ER. An email has been sent to each grade 11 and 12 student (and parent) that is assigned mandatory ER. Please note that even if the student is not assigned mandatory ER, the student is still welcome to come in and participate to improve their learning target grade to advanced (100). MOST IMPORTANTLY, for all semester long courses, this is the FINAL opportunity to remediate. All learning target grades must be at basic, proficient or advanced to earn course credit. Otherwise, the student will have to repeat the course.

School Culture

Last week we posted an online survey for STEM students to complete regarding school culture and racial concerns. The survey provided students the opportunity to give feedback and input. Earlier this week a team of students met with Dr. Donen to talk about initial feedback received and next steps. Two immediate items will be taking place as we start the second semester. The first will be a staff training to review the survey input and data. This training will also kick start continued staff development during the second semester. The second item will be the implementation of a Diversity and School Culture Committee. The committee will be part of our senate. This committee will

include both students and staff. The goal of the committee will be to develop, plan and maintain school culture initiatives.

School culture at STEM is an important aspect to our student well-being and success. Though we may not be able to disclose actions taken for corrective action with students or staff, we always work to diligently address problems as they arise. We are looking forward to working alongside our students in continuously improving STEM.

Food Drive – House Competition Winner is...

House Mirzakhani! The November House Competition – a Food Drive for the [Chattanooga Area Food Bank](#) – ended this past week and the donations were amazing! All the houses did a fabulous job of getting items needed and our bins in the front of the school were overflowing. After the House Committee did their final judging this week, the results for the competition were finalized – Mirzakhani in first, Einstein in second, Staupers in third and Tesla in fourth. However, regardless of finishing place, this really is a competition that only produces a winning situation as the Food Bank is ecstatic with the donations! Thank you to everyone who participated in having a positive impact on our community.

Magnet School Application

It's that time of the year that the magnet school application portal is open for Hamilton County Schools. For our STEM families with siblings, it is important to note that the application must also be completed.

Please [see the letter](#) from the School Choice office regarding enrollment for sibling preference. If you intend to enroll an eligible sibling (incoming 9th, 10th or 11th grader) for the upcoming school year (2022-2023), you must complete two steps.

Step 1 - Complete and return the [Sibling Identification Form](#) (this is not an application). Email the completed form by 12-15-21 to Amy Robinson (robinson_amy@hcde.org).

Step 2 - Complete the choice lottery application online by clicking the following link on the STEM School webpage: [Choice Lottery Application](#)

Silent Auction Information (from STEM Parent Leadership Team and Silent Auction Committee)

Hot off the press... Our 4th annual STEM Showcase is set for Friday, January 28th, combined with the finale of our fabulous Silent Auction! The Showcase is where our students highlight their STEM projects and community-based learning activities, so please mark your calendar for 6pm and plan to come. At the 8:00pm conclusion of this exciting in-person event, our week-long Virtual Silent Auction will come to an end, allowing families with winning bids to take home their items.

Starting Sunday, January 23rd at 8:00am, our week-long Virtual Silent Auction will be active online with nation-wide bidding throughout the week. When you come in person to the school on Friday, January 28th for the STEM Showcase, you can see the auction items up close and personal and place your final bids!

Because the auction raises funds to support STEM initiatives that all students benefit from, we ask each and every STEM family to secure one auction-able donation in the form of gift certificates, merchandise, or professional services to be turned in to the school office by Thursday, January 20th. If you (or a favorite business, or your own company) can donate a gift certificate, service, or merchandise to support STEM (or if you would like more information), please email inquiries and donations to Amy Robinson at robinson_amy@hcde.org. All donated items should be turned in to the school office as soon as feasible.

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Graduation Date, Time and Location – May 19

The Class of 2022 will be graduating on Thursday, May 19 at 7pm in Memorial Auditorium. We are super excited to have Memorial Auditorium as our location again this year. There is plenty of space so our graduates can invite as many people as they would like, and the weather does not impact the ceremony. Seniors and parents – mark your calendars now!

Email Updates – Posted on Website

These email updates are posted on the STEM School Chattanooga website by clicking the “Updates” tab. Not only will the current update be viewable, but you can look back through updates previously sent. We also share these updates in STEM General for the students in Canvas.

Thank you for your support!

Dr. Tony Donen
Principal

December 3, 2021 – STEM School Info 12/03

Parents/Guardians,

Hard to believe, but our semester is coming near to the end. As it does, here are some items we wanted to share with you.

COVID Procedures Reminder and CDC Study

Hamilton County Schools (HCS) has updated its COVID-19 protocols and guidance in accordance with the [Tennessee State COVID-19 Omnibus Bill](#). Governor Lee signed this Bill into law on November 12, 2021. In order to comply with the Omnibus Bill, HCS lifted its mask requirement as of Monday, November 8. No one is required to wear a mask; however, anyone who wishes to wear a mask may do so. This bill also limits the authority to determine quarantine and isolation requirements to the Tennessee Commissioner of Health. Therefore, HCS can no longer require anyone to quarantine under the authority of the local Hamilton County Health Department. At this point, only the state Commissioner of Health can require quarantine or isolation. Chattanooga State has also lifted its mask mandate as well all requirements for contact tracing and quarantining.

Please note that we will still advise students and staff to stay home if they are feeling ill.

As we continue to navigate COVID, we also wanted to share a recent report [posted by the CDC](#) regarding immunity and protection for COVID. Here are two highlights of that report for you.

What is known: Previous infection with SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19 vaccination can provide immunity and protection against subsequent SARS-CoV-2 infection and illness.

What is added by this report: Among COVID-19–like illness hospitalizations among adults aged ≥ 18 years whose previous infection or vaccination occurred 90–179 days earlier, the adjusted odds of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 among unvaccinated adults with previous SARS-CoV-2 infection were 5.49-fold higher than the odds among fully vaccinated recipients of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine who had no previous documented infection (95% confidence interval = 2.75–10.99).

School Culture

Yesterday we posted an announcement in STEM General for students regarding school culture and racial concerns. Here is a [link to that post](#). The post also includes a survey that provides students

the opportunity to give feedback and input. School culture at STEM is an important aspect to our student well-being and success. Though we may not be able to disclose actions taken for corrective action with students or staff, we always work to diligently address problems as they arise. This announcement and survey is an opportunity for us to learn more from our students on their experiences and develop plans to address areas for improvement. Please take time to read this post. Again, here is a [link to that post](#).

UTC Biomechatronics Internship

This fall semester, six STEM students have been participating in an internship opportunity at UTC in Biomechatronics. Here is a [link to an article](#) describing their amazing work and experience. The lead instructor for the internship opportunity, Associate Professor Dr. Erkan Kaplanoglu, posted the following on Twitter regarding his experience with our students: “I was wondering if the biomechantronics project might be too difficult to grasp for high school students – even those from STEM School Chattanooga. But I now admit I was wrong.” Insert happy face emoji. The students involved included Riley Brown, Eric Chen, Taylor Donen, Gerald Freeman, Mason Harvey, and Kayla King,

Food City and Publix Partnerships

Food City and Publix have partnered with area educators to raise money for local schools. We would love for you to participate in these programs by simply linking your Food City ValuCard to STEM School Chattanooga and signing up for Club Publix. With Thanksgiving quickly approaching, this is a perfect time to link the STEM School to your card or account and raise money for our wonderful school.

Please click on [this link for instructions](#) on linking your ValuCard and signing up for Club Publix. Let the shopping begin!

Food Drive – November House Competition – Ends Monday!

The November House Competition – a Food Drive for the [Chattanooga Area Food Bank](#) – ends on Monday, Dec 6! Items accepted include any non-perishable items, cans, boxes, etc. for the drive. At this time the Food Bank is having an increased need for canned soups, canned vegetables, and canned proteins (such as beans, peanut butter, chicken) but ALL items are welcome as we attempt to support our community! Additional information about donating can be found [here](#). Drop off bins are located at the front entrance and students may bring in items and place them in the container labeled with their House.

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STEM Showcase – January 28

Reminder to mark your calendars for Friday, January 28. We will be hosting our in-person STEM Showcase evening. The STEM Showcase will feature student displays of work from grade 9 through grade 12. This is an excellent way to see the school and the work progression expected of students as they mature over four years. We are excited to reinstate this experience for our students and parents!

Graduation Date, Time and Location – May 19

The graduation ceremony date, time and location have been set! The Class of 2022 will be graduating on Thursday, May 19 at 7pm in Memorial Auditorium. We are super excited to have Memorial Auditorium as our location again this year. There is plenty of space so our graduates can invite as many people as they would like, and the weather does not impact the ceremony. Seniors and parents – mark your calendars now!

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Dr. Tony Donen
Principal